/65 cont./

000 301 856 children (see pp. 64 ff.). A thin cord of cotton or plant fibers, which is occasionally worn below the knees, is supposed to strengthen the legs, and corresponding upper-arm cords, the muscles (in the case of boys) and the arms (in the case of girls). Moreover, small girls wear strings crossed over their chests so that they will have well-shaped breasts later on.

f) Childhood

593 ●857 Even in boyhood and girlhood the family bears the chief responsibility for all educational measures. The boy, to be sure, is now drawn to the father somewhat more and gradually begins to free himself from his mother. With his bow, which his father has made for him, he daily practices shooting small birds, for it is believed that a boy who kills many birds will later become a good hunter. They are cleaned and prepared by the girls, however, and together the children then have a meal, to which the girls often contribute cooked bananas or manioc flat-cakes. In play the children are properly prepared for their future duties and responsibilities as adults. Thus, the girls occasionally also help their mothers and fetch their water or wood, or they assume the care of their younger siblings.

861 [157] The modest, thoughtful nature of these Indian children should be emphasized. Yet they are never beaten and they never hear a harsh word either from their parents or from other adults. Gentle admonishment suffices to reprove a child if it is really naughty on occasion. Even in their play, however, there are seldom such quarrels as are so frequent among civilized children. It would be quite unthinkable, for example, for a Surára or Pakidái child to run to its mother in order to complain about a playmate.

857 152 524 Boys and girls grow up together quite naturally and without constraint, as is shown by the fact that group games are preferred to solitary games. A great favorite, among others, is a game of ball which they play with a monkey bladder. It is batted upward with the palm of the hand (see also p. 246). They also play a sort of tug-of-war with lianas (see p.244). Moreover, the boys [868] often imitate the dances of the men, while the girls are very fond of string games. It is especially popular to play "mother and

/112 cont./

789 it is not needed, for example, before hunting expeditions or
[821] during a tribal migration. In this case all the men, women,
[302] and children paint their bodies with a confusion of serpentine lines, in order by this means to command the rain to stop. If
526 this does not help, a tug of war -- toθtotó -- with a thick liana
789 is arranged. This liana personifies the sucuriju (Eunectes murinus) --
[776] uaikonyá -- which, as a strong water-animal, has the power to induce Poré to stop shaking the rain tree (see p. 199). At first only two groups of red-painted men engage in the tug of war. But if the rain simply will not abate, red-painted women also take part in it. Their participation is supposed to increase the
[776] pressure on the sucuriju, for it is assumed that it is of the female sex and thus particularly well-disposed toward women. Such a
[857] tug of war often goes on for several hours. In most cases, besides adults, I also saw children who imitated it with a thin liana.

526 If it happens to rain while the sun is shining, the Surára
789 and Pakidái believe that a serious fight has broken out between
821 the moon, from which the rain comes, and the sun. Then all the members of the tribe feel obligated to come to the aid of their Supreme Being, the moon. They do this by again forming two mixed groups of men and women -- one symbolically represents the population of the moon and the other that of the sun -- who throw wet earth at each other; this "battle" is called xejejó.

782 5. A Special Way of Showing Gratitude to Poré and Perimbó

In connection with the festival in memory of the dead (see pp. 224 ff.) after the training period of the two medicine-man helpers (see pp. 143 f.), after the curing of the sick (see pp. 211 ff.), and other magic ceremonies, the people want to thank Poré and Perimbó (see p. 197) in a special way, outside of the customary prayers which take place through the hekurá (see pp. 199/201). For this purpose a large calabash is filled with earth,
[824] into which, in a circle, are stuck red-painted twigs of the imbauba tree (Cecropia palmata Wild.), which are connected

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

especially strong and intelligent, and keep him at his side, adopting him, as it were, as his successor. The little girls continue to live in the feminine world of their tribe. Shy and submissive, they take on the humblest tasks, fetching water, making the fire and helping in the preparation—highly problematical—of food.

Such definitions of customs have, however, only a relative value, like any attempt to estimate the Shirian way of life: for Shirians are to be found spread over wild territory of vast extent. Their customs are less well defined than one might suppose after reading certain tracts about primitive peoples—the Pacific islanders, for instance. These give the impression that with slight formal changes only, Western culture might have much to learn from the degree of social organization they have attained to. The Shirian tribes, cut off from one another as they are by physical barriers such as mountains and rivers, and moral barriers like the ceaseless state of war which exists between the various branches of this race of 'howling Indians', have developed their own customs in their own sporadic fashion. Sometimes they have been weakened by contact with foreigners, such as the Makiritari in the north-west and the Makushi in the east. More often they have been weakened by a lack of strong traditions, which do not spring easily from such an excessively low level of culture, where mere survival calls for an unending struggle against the tremendous power of the eternally hostile forest.

The most primitive races are those most affected by their geographical setting. Their environment conditions them. Only by adapting themselves continually to their surroundings, only by the long process of response to the determining factor of geography, can they create that growing racial identity which at last succeeds in reversing the process—that is, in conditioning the surroundings instead of being conditioned by them. But we are here touching on the larger question of the development of civilization generally.

Where the Shirians are concerned, we are still at the beginning of the beginning, when geography is the absolute determining factor. Here environment is the master of man—a creature inferior, qualitatively and quantitatively, to the region which it is his fate to inhabit.

The territory they occupy is immense. Divided though it may be by great cordilleras, which make it the breeding ground for various rivers rushing north, west and south, it possesses one marked characteristic throughout its whole extent: the sources and the headwaters of the rivers are contained in a sort of

/441 cont./

Obtaining Food

224 Hunting.

Hunting is done with bows and arrows.

A broad arrow-point of bamboo is used against larger land game, such as the danta, the váquiros /peccaries/, and the large [411] rodents. Poisoned points are used against monkeys and occasionally against dantas. Bone points are used principally to hunt birds. Small birds are hunted with arrows with a blunt point or forked point.

[231] Dogs are used in hunting, and in the case of the smallest wild pigs, these dogs frequently do more killing than the hunters.

The hunters hunt together and surround the game. The one who succeeds in killing it is the owner of the animal. He might make a gift of a few pieces to those who have helped him, but in general he carries the entire animal to his house, where it is cooked. A danta, of course, must be divided up on the spot in order to be transported.

262 Almost all the mammals are eaten, felines being the principal exception. A few snakes are eaten; others are not. The babilla /an amphidious reptile/ is also eaten. Birds of prey, such as hawks, eagles, vultures, and turkey buzzards and others, are not eaten. Almost all the other birds are eaten, even the little humming birds.

/442/ Meat is considered an essential part of the diet and perhaps occupies the second place of importance after platanos.

226 Fishing.

Several types of toxins are used to poison fish in the small currents of water. One of these is a bejuco. Another is the shell of an edible nut with a prickly husk. Another is the bark of a certain tree of great size.

226 When the waters lower in streams and swamps (generally
462 around the months of January and February), women and children
● 857 go out armed with clubs and come back with baskets full of fish.

/445 cont./

241 Many of the Guaika /Waica/ are very careful with regard to weeding their plantings, especially when the plants are small. Later, when the plants have reached a good development, they weed the plantings less frequently. Then, perhaps three or more years later, when the land has begun to yield less produce, they cease weeding it altogether and harvest only what has managed to grow by hard efforts.

222 Generally, there is found in these "conucos," at least in the abandoned ones, the "pijiguao" palm. This is because the "pijiguao" begins to produce about the time the earth has become too poor for other produce.

222 481 The fruit of the "pijiguao" palm is harvested by loosening the bunches by means of a long pole with a hook. When the palm has grown too much to perform /446/ this operation from the ground, the Guaika climb it, using two devices, each one made out of a pair of sticks tied together in the form of an X, which, although being adjusted to the thorny trunk of the palm, can be slid up or down while the climber keeps his foot on one of these platforms (see Fig. 1). Once the bunch has been reached and loosened, it is carefully lowered to the ground, tied to a liana to prevent the fruit from being damaged by a fall from such a height. /[illegible] Fig. 1 appears here./

241 [462] The men are the ones who clear the "conucos." The women go to the "conucos" more than anything in order to transport the harvests to their homes.

241 857 [423] Every family has its own "conuco." Frequently the boys begin to prepare their own "conucos" at an early age (at about 11 years old). Even boys seven years old succeed in having a few of their own plants in the "conuco" of their father or of their older brother. Other boys only help their father in the plantings and have little or nothing until they reach 18 years of age or more.

/464 cont./

411 The children make small bows, generally for their games, but
● 897 they also shoot lizards, which are good bait for fishing. These
[824] bows may be made of several types of wood, but rarely of palm.
The bows of the men are always made of palm.

411 Macanas are used by women for fishing. They are also used
[226] by men in their attacks on other settlements with which they have had more or less friendly relations, for the purpose of recovering the wife or daughter held captive there.

[531]

/Fig. 7/

Poisons

278 A variety of poisons for fishing are used by the Guaika
[226] /Waica/. One comes from a vine, another from the husk of a prickly nut, and the third from the bark of a certain thick tree.

[411] Arrow points are poisoned with the poison from the bark of a vine. They scrape the bark, and the scrapings, /465/ wrapped in leaves, are kept dry by hanging them over the current of air from a fire until they are needed.

On the day when an Indian is going to prepare poison, every man of the settlement gets ready to prepare a set of arrow points to be poisoned.

The preparer of the poison begins by pulverizing the scrapings of bark between the palms of his hands. He constantly utters a
[415] series of shouts and grunts while doing this. Then he places the pulverized bark in a funnel made of leaves, into which hot water

/156 cont./

721 In December of 1953 the Shibaatía-tjeti came back to make
123 another raid, accompanied by the Comishibueitjeti. But the Majecototjeti had camped outside, on the other side of the river. Some of the Shibaatía-tjeti approached us carrying an arrow, but leaving their bows in the woods with the other men. They explained that they were friendly visitors and asked where the Majecototjeti were, because they were supposed to visit them. But their black war-paint showed that they had come on a raid. (Visitors are painted with red or mulberry color, but not black.) When they saw that they were not going to get us to tell them where the people were, they asked us to give them matches and fishhooks. They gave us in exchange some knives made of tooth. After this things calmed down, but from this time on the people of Majecototjeti have lived inside their palisades when they were near their main farm.

[302] [574] [822] [412] [361]

166 The people of Majecototjeti started a new farm called
361 "Joitja-tjeca" to the south of the Orinoco, where they could
721 live without palisades and feel safe from raids by the Shibaatía-tjeti. The Majecototjeti did not plan any retaliatory raid, because they said, "None of our men have been killed."

727 In September of 1954 I had camped with the Majecototjeti at
361 their new farm to the south of the Orinoco River. Everybody was
[114] calmer there, and they seemed to feel freer than at any time since the first raid by the Shibaatía-tjeti had put them on the alert almost a year before.

222 Anyone who wished to do so could go out and gather fruit,
[226] fish, or hunt crabs, even in small groups. The boys were having
[411] fun shooting at the fish in the many streams with their little arrows
[857] of split palm shoots and bows made of a curved stick and a piece of twisted bark. It was the season of the moriche fruit, and the /157/ women went out almost every day and came back carrying
726 baskets full of this fruit. One afternoon about 1:00 P.M. some came to the aldea and said that a great number of tracks had been seen not far from the aldea. A group of men went out to investigate.

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of other villages—such alliances are stabilized by exchanges of women between the partners, a breach of the prescriptive marriage rules. It is for this reason that such a large discrepancy exists between the ideal behavior and the actual practice, as noted in Table 2.[18]

Division of Labor and Daily Social Life

The daily activities and general social life are not as circumscribed by rules and regulations as would appear from the foregoing discussion. In fact, one first has the impression that chaos rather than order reigns over the daily activities of the village members![19] Thus, while ideal rules about behavior definitely exist, individuals have a great deal of freedom to manipulate their behavior in such a way that they are not unduly encumbered by them. Most of the run-of-the-mill activities of daily life are not characterized by inflexible prescriptions regarding proper behavior.

MALE-FEMALE DIVISION There are a number of distinctions based on status differences that are important in daily life. Perhaps the most conspicuous and most important is the distinction between males and females.

Yanomamö society is decidedly masculine. As was discussed earlier, there is a definite preference to have male children, resulting in a higher incidence of female infanticide as opposed to male infanticide. Female children assume duties and responsibilities in the household long before their brothers are obliged to participate in useful domestic tasks. For the most part, little girls are obliged to tend their younger brothers and sisters, although they are also expected to help their mothers in other chores such as cooking, hauling water, and collecting firewood. By the time girls have reached puberty they have already learned that their world is decidedly less attractive than that of their brothers.

As members of local descent groups, girls have almost no voice in the decisions reached by their agnates concerning their marriage. They are largely pawns to be disposed of by their kinsmen, and their wishes are given very little consideration. In many cases, the girl has been promised to a man long before she reaches puberty, and in some cases her husband actually raises her for part of her childhood. In short, they do not participate as equals in the political affairs of the corporate kinship group and seem to inherit most of the duties without enjoying many of the privileges.

Marriage does not enhance the status of the girl, for her duties as wife require her to assume difficult and laborious tasks too menial to be executed by the men. For the most part these include the incessant demands for firewood and drinking water, particularly the former. Women spend several hours each day scouring the neighborhood

[18]Reducing kinship usage to the logical extremes to which the Yanomamö take it, there really is no discrepancy between theory and practice, except in the case of incest. When new villages enter into contact for the first time, their respective headmen call each other *shaviwi* (brother-in-law). The first exchanges between the groups usually involve the children of these men. The children, of course, stand in marriageable relationship to each other because the children of brothers-in-law can, by the prescriptive definitions, marry.

[19]Many fieldworkers do not begin to see the patterns of behavior until they have spent months of intensive contact with their subjects. I was convinced, after five or six months, that there were almost no guidelines for behavior. A part of the difficulty resulted from the language barrier. The patterns began to emerge only after about six months, and only then could I begin asking pertinent questions about many features of social organization.

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Women always bring their children with them, particularly younger children, so that if they are abducted, the child will not starve to death because of the separation of the mother. They are therefore concerned with the political behavior of their men and occasionally goad them into taking action against some possible enemy by caustically accusing the men of cowardice. This has the effect of establishing the village's reputation for ferocity, reducing the possibility of raiders abducting the women while they are out collecting firewood or garden product. The men cannot stand being chided by the women in this fashion, and are forced to take action if the women unite against them.

569 721 [165]

CHILD-ADULT DIVISION Despite the fact that children of both sexes spend much of their time with their mothers, the boys alone are treated with considerable indulgence by their fathers from an early age. Thus, the distinction between male and female status develops early in the socialization process, and the boys are quick to learn their favored position with respect to girls. They are encouraged to be "fierce" and are rarely punished by their parents for inflicting blows on them or on the hapless girls in the village. Kaobawä, for example, lets Ariwari beat him on the face and head to express his anger and temper, laughing and commenting on his ferocity. Although Ariwari is only about four years old, he has already learned that the appropriate response to a flush of anger is to strike someone with his hand or with an object, and it is not uncommon for him to give his father a healthy smack in the face whenever something displeases him. He is frequently goaded into hitting his father by teasing, being rewarded by gleeful cheers of assent from his mother and from the other adults in the household.

858 865 [593]

Fig. 3-7. Ariwari, Kaobawä's favorite son, building a make-believe house while camping with his father. His "sister" (father's brother's daughter) looks on.

142 302 857 137

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When Kąobawä's group travels, Ariwari emulates his father by copying his activities on a child's scale. For example, he erects a temporary hut from small sticks and discarded leaves and plays happily in his own camp (see Fig. 3–7). His sisters, however, are pressed into more practical labor and help their mother do useful tasks. Still, the young girls are given some freedom to play at being adults and have their moments of fun with their mothers.

But a girl's childhood ends sooner than a boy's. The game of playing house fades imperceptibly into a constant responsibility to help mother. By the time a girl is ten years old or so, she has become an economic asset to the mother and spends a great deal of time working. Little boys, by contrast, spend hours playing among themselves and are able to prolong their childhood into their late teens if they so wish. By that time a girl has married, and may even have a child or two.

A girl's transition to womanhood is obvious because of its physiological manifestations. At first menses (*yakëmaa*) Yąnomamö girls are confined to their houses and hidden behind a screen of leaves. Their old cotton garments are discarded and replaced by new ones manufactured by their mothers or by older female friends. During this week of confinement, the girl is fed by her relatives; her food must be eaten by means of a stick, as she is not allowed to come into contact with it in any other fashion. She must also scratch herself with another set of sticks. The Yąnomamö word for menstruation translates literally as "squatting" (*reo*), and that fairly accurately describes what pubescent females (and adult women) do during menstruation. Yąnomamö women do not employ tampons; they simply remain inactive during menstruation, squatting on their haunches most of the time. After her puberty confinement, a girl is eligible to begin life as a wife and take up residence with her husband.

Males, on the other hand, do not have their transition into manhood marked by a ceremony. Nevertheless, one can usually tell when a boy is attempting to enter the world of men. The most conspicuous sign is his anger when others call him by his name. When the adults in the village cease using his personal name, the young man has achieved some sort of masculine adult status. Young men are always very touchy about their names and they, more than anyone else, take quick offense when hearing their names mentioned. The Yąnomamö constantly employ teknonymy when a kinship usage is ambiguous. Thus, someone may wish to refer to Kąobawä in a conversation, but the kinship term appropriate to the occasion might not distinguish him from his several brothers. Then, Kąobawä will be referred to as "father of Ariwari." However, when Ariwari gets older, he will attempt to put a stop to this in an effort to establish his status as an adult. A young man has been recognized as an adult when people no longer use his name in teknonymous references. Still, the transition is not abrupt, and it is not marked by a recognizable point in time.

Finally, the children differ from adults in their susceptibility to supernatural hazards. A great deal of Yąnomamö sorcery and mythological references to harmful magic focuses on children as the target of malevolence. Yąnomamö shamans are constantly sending evil spirits (*Hekura*) to enemy villages. There, they secretly attack and devour the vulnerable portion of the childrens' souls (*noreshi*), bringing about sickness and death. These same shamans spend an equal amount of time warding off the dangerous spirits sent by their enemies. Children are vulnerable because their souls are not firmly established within their physical beings, and can wander out of the body almost at will. The

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supplies soak the new leaves in water and add ashes from the hearth to the wad. Men, women, and children chew tobacco and all are addicted to it. Once there was a shortage of tobacco in Kaobawä's village and I was plagued for a week by early morning visitors who requested permission to collect my cigarette butts in order to make a wad of chewing tobacco. Normally, if anyone is short of tobacco, he can request a share of someone else's already chewed wad, or simply borrow the entire wad when its owner puts it down somewhere. Tobacco is so important to them that their word for "poverty" translates as "being without tobacco." I frequently justified my reluctance to give away possessions on the basis of my poverty. Many of them responded by spitting their tobacco into their hand and handing it to me.

Work begins as soon as breakfast is completed; the Yanomamö like to take advantage of the morning coolness. Within an hour after it is light the men are in their gardens clearing brush, felling large trees, transplanting plantain cuttings, burning off dead timber, or planting new crops of cotton, maize, sweet potatoes, yuca, taro, or the like, depending on the season. They work until 10:30 A.M., retiring because it is too humid and hot by that time to continue with their strenuous work. Most of them bathe in the stream before returning to their hammocks for a rest and a meal.

The women usually accompany their husbands to the garden and occupy themselves by collecting firewood or helping with planting and weeding. In this way the men are sure that their families are safe and that the women are not having affairs with other men.

The children spend a great deal of time exploring the wonders of the plant and animal life around them and are accomplished biologists at an early age. Most twelve-year-old boys can, for example, name twenty species of bees and give the anatomical or behavioral reasons for their distinctions—and they know which ones produce the best honey. An eight-year-old girl brought me a tiny egg-like structure on one occasion and asked me to watch it with her. Presently it cracked open and numerous baby cockroaches poured out, while she described the intimate details of the reproductive process to me.

The younger children stay close to their mothers, but the older ones have considerable freedom to wander about the garden at play. Young boys hunt for lizards with miniature bows and featherless arrows. If they can capture one alive, they bring it back to the village and tie a string around it. The string is anchored to a stick in the village clearing and the little boys chase it gleefully, shooting scores of tiny arrows at it (see Fig. 3–8). Since lizards are very quick, and little boys are poor shots, the target practice can last for hours. Usually, however, the fun terminates when an older boy decides to make an end to the unhappy lizard and kills it with his adult-size arrows, showing off his archery skills to the disgruntled small fry.

Little girls learn very quickly that it is a man's world, for they soon must assume much of the responsibility for tending their younger siblings, hauling water and firewood, and in general helping their busy mothers.

Most of the people rest in their hammocks during the heat of midday, although they will collect fruits and other wild foods from the surrounding area, if any are in season. They avoid being in the direct rays of the midday sun.

If the men return to their gardening, they do so about 4:00 P.M., working until sundown. Otherwise, they gather in small groups around the village and take hallucinogenic drugs in the late afternoon shadows, chanting to the mountain demons as the

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drugs take effect. This usually lasts for an hour or so, after which the men bathe to wash the vomit or nasal mucus off their bodies. Kaobawä does not participate in the drug-taking, as he finds it unpleasant. Most of the men, however, do take drugs and enjoy doing it, despite the associated unpleasantries of vomiting and the pain that follows the blast of air as the powder is blown deeply into the nasal passages.

Whatever the men do for the afternoon, however, the women invariably search for firewood and haul immense, heavy loads of it to their houses just before dark.

Fig. 3–8. Boys shooting tiny arrows into a lizard they have captured. The lizard is tied to a string and allowed to run around the village while the boys gleefully chase it. Here they have wounded it and are about to fill it full of arrows.

The biggest meal of the day is prepared in the evening. The staple is plantains, but frequently other kinds of food are available after the day's activities. Meat is always the most desirable food and is always considered to be in short supply. It is a happy occasion when one of the hunters bags a tapir, for everyone gets a large share of it.

It is good to share meat with others. This attitude is expressed in the sentiment that a hunter should give away most of the game he kills. One of the obligations men take very seriously is providing adequate quantities of meat for their wives and children. They genuinely abhor hearing their children cry for meat; this calls into question their abilities as hunters and marksmen, both of which are associated with prestige. Rerebawä, for example, collected a large supply of game on one trip we took together. He gave it all to his wife and children and to his wife's parents. At the evening meal he refused to